

May 6, 2014

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
United States Senate
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Klobuchar,

Mall of America, "America's Mall" and one of the most visited attractions in the country, would like to thank you for introducing S. 2250, the "Travel Promotion, Enhancement, and Modernization Act." Tourists, particularly those from international markets have a huge positive impact on our local and national economy. Brand USA has been instrumental in increasing visitation to the United States since 2011. This increase resulted in 53,000 new jobs and a \$7.4 billion impact on the U.S. economy.

The international tourist market is the most significant opportunity for Mall of America's \$1 billion expansion plan over the next 10 years. Our research shows an international visitor spends on average at least 2.5 times more money per visit to MOA than a local shopper and 1.5 more than a U.S. tourist. In addition, for every \$1 international visitors spend at the Mall, they spend at least \$3 more in the local economy on lodging, car rental, dining, theater, professional sports, etc. Brand USA is the critical fuel for MOA to achieve this growth through partnership activities.

At Mall of America we have seen an increase in visitors from China due to partner marketing with Brand USA and complementary promotional activities. Chinese visitors have quickly become the highest spending international tourists in our country. Brand USA is our key to promote effectively in China, Brazil, Mexico and many other international markets which we otherwise could not.

Brand USA has another important benefit in that it allows Mall of America to partner closely with Explore Minnesota Tourism, the Bloomington Convention and Visitors Bureau and other state tourism entities through coordinated opportunities. For example, MOA partnered with EMT and BCBV last summer to produce in-language promotional videos for China, Japan, Brazil, Mexico, Germany and Canada. We are showcasing Minnesota's state-wide tourism entities on many websites and through social media to international audiences throughout the world. Brand USA is the basis for these targeted and effective tourism activities.

As you know, tourism is a \$12.5 billion industry in Minnesota and employs 245,000 residents. MOA and other state tourism organizations are working closely with EMT to grow tourism to a \$20 billion industry by 2020. This is an aggressive plan and achievable only with Brand USA providing the international marketing platform. A \$20 billion state tourism industry will produce thousands of new jobs and increase state revenue for a multitude of benefits including education, transportation and health care.

It is critical to our economy that we keep marketing the United States through Brand USA. Letting the world know that all parts of America are full of history, cultural attractions, entertainment, unique cuisine and of course, great retail will continue to increase visits and create thousands of new jobs.

S. 2250 would strengthen the United States' position in the global travel and tourism market by reauthorizing Brand USA, a vital public-private partnership that promotes international travel to the U.S. and at no cost to taxpayers.

The travel and tourism industry is an important piece of the overall U.S. economy, and Brand USA strengthens that sector by encouraging millions of international visitors to come to the U.S., who spend billions of dollars in our economy.

Mall of America thanks you for introducing this important bill and for your continued support of our tourism industry.

Sincerely,



Maureen Hooley Bausch
Executive Vice President
Mall of America